Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs Agreement), the Patents Act, 1970 is required to be amended to introduce product patent protection for inventions in the fields of food, chemicals and pharmaceuticals in addition to the existing process patent protection. India has time till 1.1.2005 to do so. A Bill, namely, the Patents (Amendment) Bill, 2003 to amend the Patents Act was introduced in Lok Sabha on 22.12.2003. This Bill contained also several measures aimed at simplification of processing of patent applications. With the dissolution of Thirteenth Lok Sabha, the said Bill has lapsed.

Fall in industrial growth

1167. DR. T SUBBARAMI REDDY:

SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the industrial growth slipped to 6.2 per cent in May, 2004 which is slower as compared to 6.4 per cent growth in the same month last year

(b) if so, the reasons for slow growth in the industrial sector; and

(c) the steps being taken to improve the industrial growth in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.VK.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir. As per 'Quick Estimates' data of Index of Industrial Production (IIP), with base year 1993-94=100, released (on 12th July, 2004) by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), the overall growth in the industrial sector was 6.2 per cent in May, 2004 as compared to 6.4 percent in May, 2003.

(b) Disaggregated sectoral data show that the lower overall industrial growth in May, 2004 is attributed to lower growth in electricity generation of 3.6 per cent in May, 2004 as compared to 5.2 per cent in May, 2003. However, output in mining and manufacturing sector posted an increase of 4.9 per cent and 6.7 per cent in May, 2004 as compared to 4.7 per cent and 6.7 per cent respectively in May, 2003.

(c) Government has put in place various policies to promote industrial growth. These include delicensing of industrial capacity, liberalisation of foreign trade regime and rationalisation of duty/tax rates in case of customs, excise and corporate taxation. Further, Union Budget for 2004-05 has made number

of announcements, which will have a favourable impact on industrial growth. These include setting up of National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council to suggest measures to enhance competitiveness in the manufacturing sector, the establishment of the Investment Commission to woo and facilitate both domestic and foreign businesses to invest in India and rationalisation of excise and customs duties.

Indo-China Trade

1168. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REEDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India-China bilateral trade has touched $ 10 billion during the current year;

(b) if so, what was the trade during the year 2003-04;

(c) whether Government are considering to improve the trade with China further during 2004-05; and

(d) if so, the steps being considered in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Indo-China Bilateral Trade during 2003-04 amounted to US $7007.57 million (Provisional).

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Steps being taken, on an on-going basis, for increasing Indo-China Trade include, participation in trade fairs/ exhibitions, organizing buyer-seller meets, exchange of delegation at both Governmental and Business levels, exchange of information etc.

Flower export zones

1169. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new deal for rural India would be extended to set up flower export zones at various parts of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and